

REMARKS

The Office Action of September 5, 2008, contains a 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejection based on use of the phrase powder “slash” molding in Claims 15-17 and the “boiling point” limitation in Claim 5. It also contains six separate prior art rejections founded on 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 (b) and/or 102(e). For the reasons hereinafter set forth, applicants respectfully submit that each of those rejections has been overcome by amendment, or argument, and should be withdrawn.

Regarding the 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejection of Claims 15-17, these claims have been amended to delete the term “slash”. As to Claim 5, applicants submit that the claim clearly means the “boiling point” at normal pressure to ordinarily skilled artisans.

Regarding the 35 U.S.C. § 102 rejections, the characteristic features and objects of the present invention are to provide a thermoplastic elastomer composition (an acrylic block copolymer composition) having improved melt flowability during molding and excellent heat resistance, weather resistance, chemical resistance, adhesivity, flexibility and abrasion resistance for the product. The composition specifically defined in Claim 1 is formed by converting the acrylic block copolymer to having a high molecular weight or crosslinking the acrylic block copolymer at molding.

In contrast to the Claim 1 invention, the Reitberg (WO 99/62978) reference relates to “a powder paint composition” for a powder coating having good mechanical properties and a superior resistance to chemicals. Thus, the objects are different than those of the Claim 1 invention and Reitberg. In Reitberg, a high molecular polymer is not intended because it relates to a powder paint composition. In fact, in the claims of Reitberg there is no disclosure of a molecular weight of polymer ingredients and, in the specification, a molecular weight of 800 to 10,000 is disclosed as a preferable range (page 5, lines 9-14) and it is less than 10,000 in Examples. In the Claim 1 invention, in sharp contrast a rather high molecular weight, 30,000 to 200,000, (in PREPARATION EXAMPLES, the molecular weight is 72,200 to 119,200), is necessary for mechanical properties as an elastomer (see numbered paragraph [0032]). In Reitberg, flowability at molding is not concerned as an object because of the lower molecular weight and, therefore, such a high molecular weight polymer ingredient is completely unrelated to

the Claim 1 concept. It will thus be seen that the invention, as defined in the revised Claim 1, is not anticipated by Reitberg.

With respect to the Goetz et al. reference, it could be said that the functional group of the epoxy-containing acrylic resin (GMA functional acrylic resin) in Table 2 is not reacted with the block copolymer of Table 1 but with the carboxylic group of DDDA. Originally, the block copolymer of Table 1 contains no carboxylic group. Though the Examiner insists that TBMA (note of the table refers to IBMA?), no conversion to a carboxylic group (in Examples of the present invention TBMA unit is converted to acid anhydride/carboxylic group) is affected. Though an epoxy-containing acrylic resin is disclosed, there is no disclosure on combination with a carboxylic group-containing acrylic type block copolymer reactive with the epoxy group. As such, Claim 1 is not anticipated by Goetz et al.

With respect to the Tsuji et al. reference, there is no disclosure of reacting functional groups of X and Y with each other upon molding to make into a highly polymerized product. As such, Claim 1 is not anticipated by Tsuji et al.

With respect to the Kakeda et al. reference, there is no disclosure of reacting X with Y upon molding to improve melt-fluidizability and heat resistance upon molding. As such, Claim 1 is not anticipated by Kakeda et al.


With respect to the Spinelli et al. reference, a molecular weight of the epoxy-containing acrylic type block copolymer is small, and there is no disclosure of reacting X with Y upon molding to improve melt-fluidizability and heat resistance upon molding. As such, Claim 1 is not anticipated by Spinelli et al.

With respect to the Kaneda reference, the compound (B) is made into a polymer by restriction of the molecular weight to that of original Claim 6, i.e., 50,000 or less. As such, Claim 1 is not anticipated by Kaneda.

It will now be seen that each of the aforescribed rejections should be withdrawn. Accordingly, the application should be in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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